

Takoma Park Committee on the Environment
May 8, 2007

Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

COE members:

Catherine Tunis

Albert Nunez

Jonathan Wrotny

Kea Woodruff

Jane Powers, Takoma Park citizen

Barbara Beelar, Takoma Park citizen and former Committee member

Public Works Director, Daryl Braithwaite

Meeting called to order at 7:45 pm.

Barbara and Jane are trying to do follow-up work with people who attended the Green Building workshop, but have been unable to get a contact list. Catherine has requested the attendee list also and has not been able to get it. Catherine will ask again.

Arbor Day follow-up: Catherine reported that there was good turnout, likely due to COE promotion of the event. COE had a table with Committee and other handouts. Catherine had prepared a color handout with descriptions of the trees given away that was popular. There was also a rain barrel at the table to promote the rain barrel event.

Rain barrel workshop: Kea reported that the workshop was full – all barrels were used. COE set the materials fee based on what was charged last year, but this year's materials cost less, so there will be extra money from the workshop (about \$200). Catherine would have liked to have seen more COE members help with the workshop.

Mercury switch follow-up: Catherine talked to one of the tributary team chairs about the legislation, and he agreed to bring it up at their steering committee meeting in December. Catherine will follow up in November. Catherine will write a mercury switch article for the newsletter.

Electronics recycling: Jack's article and Catherine's announcement appeared in the Newsletter. Daryl reported that there was less participation and volume than in 2005.

Catherine reported that her florescent bulb and household hazardous waste article did not appear because the City is now collecting them.

Albert suggested next newsletter article should be about keeping homes cool in the summer.

Catherine invited the mayor and Councilmember Colleen Clay to walk the proposed Long Branch Trail area several weeks ago. The mayor declined to attend, but Colleen and Catherine viewed the site for proposed trail construction. Colleen thinks a new/reconstructed

bridge is all that is needed to provide trail access for Ward 6 citizens, and agrees that a new trail is not needed. Barbara thinks someone from Friends of Sligo Creek should contact the mayor to let her know how much opposition exists to the proposed trail.

Catherine reported that Colleen was also very concerned about stormwater management and how to protect the watershed while keeping stormwater from flooding downhill neighbors. She would like to see the City sponsor neighborhood rain gardens and barrels. Catherine suggested partnering with Montgomery County programs to do that. Catherine has also heard of stormwater concerns from other citizens and Councilmembers.

Catherine would like to do a Takoma Park tree inventory this summer. Volunteers could be recruited. Kea has a contact name within the local Scouts organization if they are interested. Barbara suggested homeowners here could be recruited to survey the trees on their own property, by providing an instructional pamphlet in the newsletter, or a link on the website. Barbara also suggested COE ask Council if they would consider making inventory of all trees on a property a condition of granting tree removal permits. Catherine will look at her tree inventory software to see what systems it's compatible with and report back at the next meeting. Daryl mentioned that the City of San Francisco is doing an interactive tree inventory.

Jane has been researching the new EPA program to promote environmental stewardship, have stormwater swales, etc., have municipalities implement regulations protecting the Chesapeake. Catherine would like to see Takoma Park partner with the Montgomery County to support stormwater controls on private land, the Rainscapes program, perhaps use some grant money— the City Planner (Ilona Blanchard) should be able to provide more information. Barbara noted the problems with property owners putting in new driveways and other impervious surfaces with no controls. She suggested a high stormwater fee that could be reduced if the owner used rain barrels and rain gardens. Albert mentioned the German rain tax.

Barbara talked about green buildings to Marian Clark, with the Parks and Planning Dept., who encouraged COE to petition Council to partner with the Going Green at Home program. COE will try to find out what a formal partnership would entail. Catherine will try to get a list of attendees from Ilona so we can organize a brainstorming session.

Jane asked about how overwhelmed homeowners should tackle projects that convert to greater efficiency. Albert suggested the order is:

1. Energy conservation
2. Waste heat and wastewater recovery
3. Energy efficiency
4. Passive solar (i.e. landscaping, micro-climate conditioning), materials of structure, and use of bicycles
5. Active (solar)

Any remaining energy balance would be picked up by fossil fuels. Jane and Barbara will work on an article to elaborate on Albert's outline, and also incorporate environmentally preferable purchasing.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.